



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

JOHN PEYTON
MAYOR

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JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32202

July 6, 2004

Ms. Susan B. Towler, APR
BlueCross BlueShield of Florida
4800 Deerwood Campus Parkway, DC 3-4
Jacksonville, Florida 32246

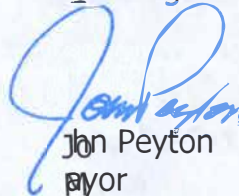
Dear Susan:

Thanks so much for your participation in the announcement of RALLY Jacksonville!

Susan, I am grateful for the good corporate citizenship of BlueCross BlueShield of Florida, and for your support and interest in this initiative. I'm excited about the chance we have to move the needle on literacy in Jacksonville and look forward to working with you as our efforts progress.

Thanks again.

Warm regards,


John Peyton
Mayor

JP/sp



a smart start

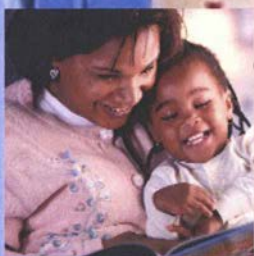




The Don Brewer

Early Learning
and Professional
Development

Center





The Don Brewer

and Professional

Jacksonville's

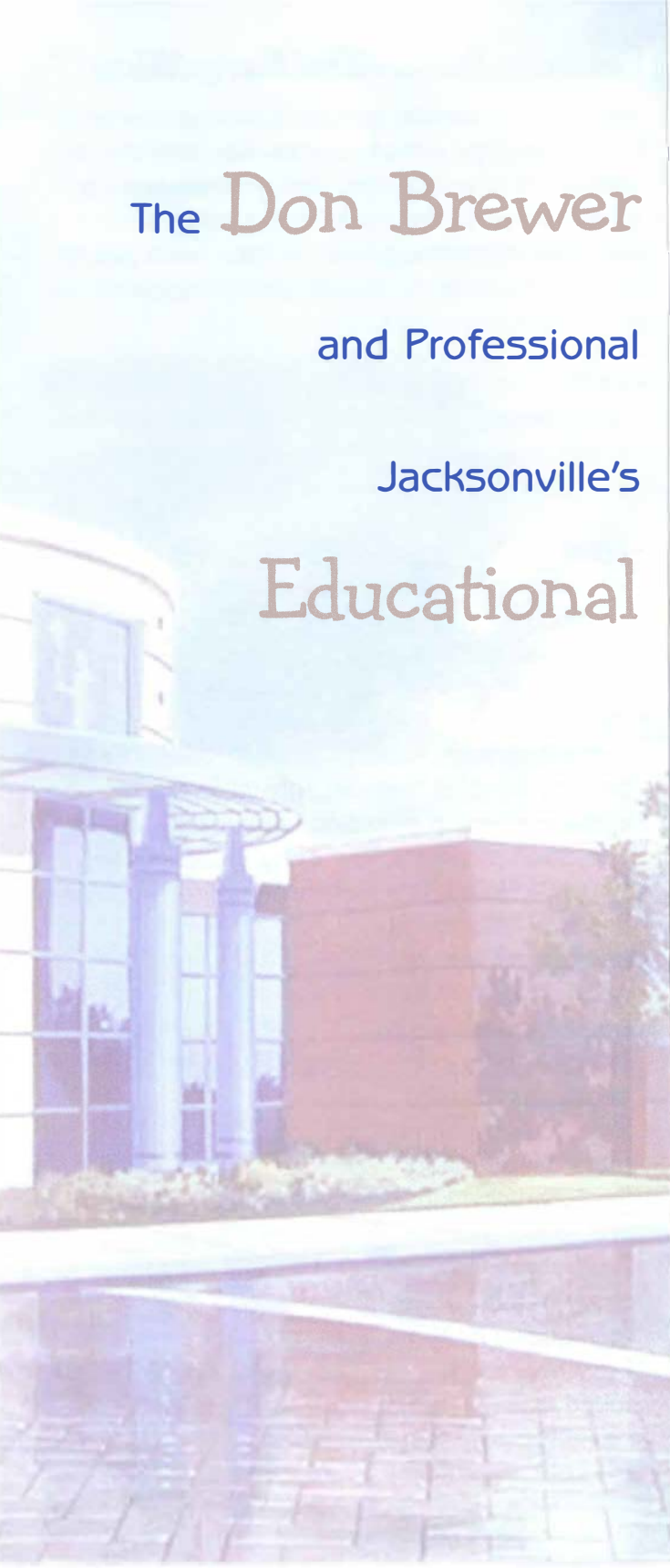
Educational

Early Learning

Development Center

"Tipping Point" for

Success



The world of the Tipping Point is a place where the unexpected becomes expected, where radical change is more than a possibility. It is — contrary to all our expectations — a certainty.

— Malcolm Gladwell, The Tipping Point:
How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference

Pressure Point: The Early Years

Research has shown that the early years of a child's development are crucial. The environments and experiences young children are exposed to set the stage for future development in school and in life. Focusing efforts on those early years can "tip" the balance toward greatly improved educational outcomes.

- Children who enter kindergarten with limited early literacy and readiness skills are more likely to develop reading difficulties and do poorly in school.
- Children who are not reading on grade level by the end of third grade are more likely to continue to lag behind their peers and drop out of school.
- Evidence shows that high-quality early education offers long-term benefits for both children and society, benefits that can substantially offset the costs involved in providing high-quality care and education programs. The Perry Preschool and Abecedarian studies (both with rigorous research designs) followed participants over many years. Documented benefits of high-quality early education included lower juvenile crime rates, greater labor force participation, and higher incomes. A cost/benefits study of the high-quality Perry Preschool program found that monetary benefits exceeded the cost per child by a factor of 4:1.



The Brewer Center Vision

To serve as driving force to dramatically improve the readiness outcomes of Jacksonville's children, ages birth to five, with a special emphasis on literacy through collaborative partnerships among private, public, and governmental agencies and constituencies.



Mission

The mission of The Brewer Center is to serve as a part of a city-wide, research-based and results-driven school readiness support infrastructure that brings together researchers and practitioners to tackle pressing problems of practice by:

- establishing a community-based model demonstration center...,
- developing and implementing a practice-focused research and development agenda...,
- developing outreach and professional development strategies..., and
- forging strong community partnerships.

Why Invest in The Brewer Center?

The Don Brewer Early Learning and Professional Development Center (The Brewer Center) will serve as a "Tipping Point" for Duval County. The Center will dramatically improve early care and learning in Jacksonville and the state by:

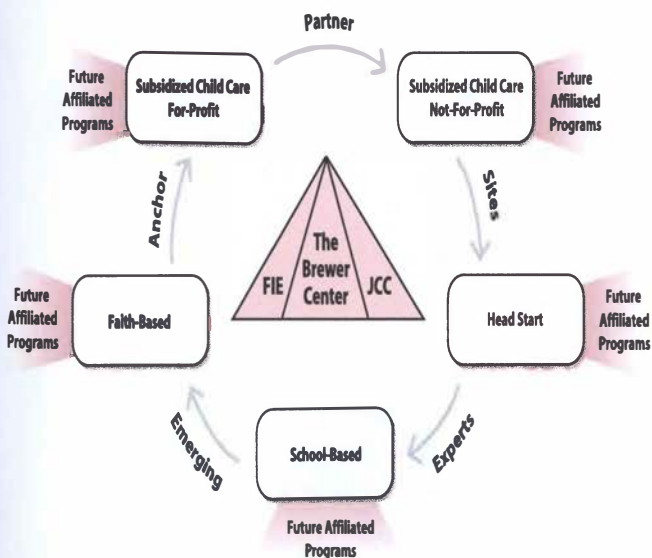
- Serving as a model state-of-the-art, standards- and research-based child care facility, providing extended care and learning services for at-risk children between birth and age five;
- Providing leadership to improve the quality of early care and learning services locally, regionally, and across the state;
- Conducting practice-focused research to improve practice, develop new knowledge, engage in productive change, and improve children's readiness outcomes, especially for those children living in high-needs neighborhoods; and
- Serving as a focal point for the dissemination of research- and evidence-based tools, strategies, and models to early care and learning programs for children birth to five.

An investment in The Brewer Center will help "tip" the balance toward success for many children in Duval County, and throughout Florida.



Partnership

The Brewer Center is a partnership between the Florida Institute of Education at the University of North Florida, the Jacksonville Children's Commission, neighborhood centers serving children from low-income families, and child advocates in Jacksonville and across the state.





Contact Information:

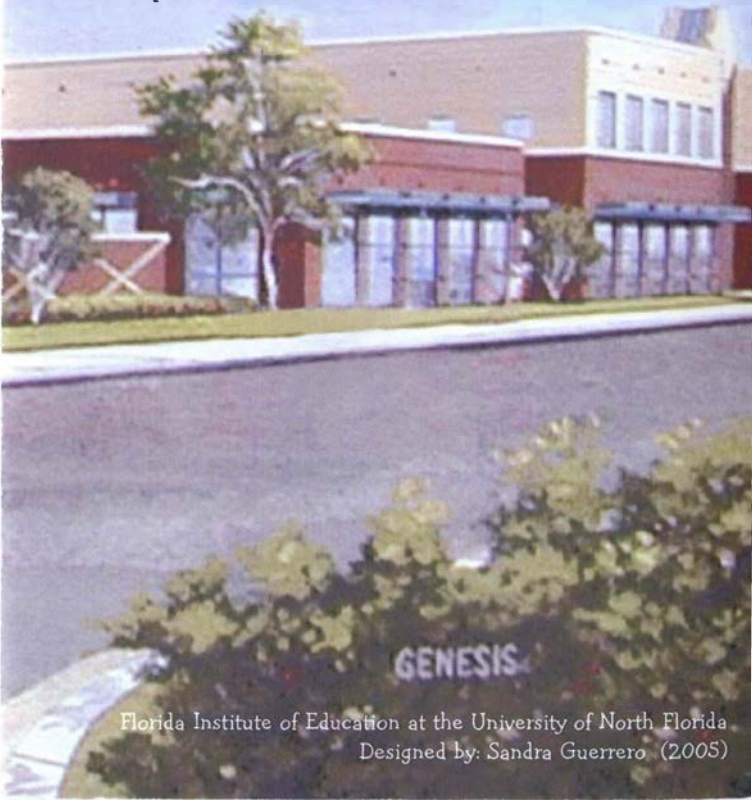
Frances Gupton, Director
Don Brewer Early Learning and Professional
Development Center

Jacksonville Children's Commission
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Jacksonville, Florida 32206

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www.jaxkids.org

Department of Children and Families CCF# 16-1086



success starts at the earliest ages

We all want our children to have the very best chance for success in school and in life. We want them to do well in their studies. And we want them to grow up to be solid citizens with all the advantages a good education can offer.

Recent research has shown educators how to improve the chances that our children achieve all these goals. And it all starts at a very young age.

The Don Brewer Learning Center was created to help give children from infants through age five the skills they need to succeed when they start school—and long after. It's an exciting place that can help kids achieve great things.

The Center places the most advanced education tools in the hands of passionate, highly trained teachers who help children learn more easily with each passing day. It is the very first educational and training facility of its kind in the nation.



getting children ready to learn

Children are born ready and eager to learn. In fact, 90 percent of brain growth occurs before kindergarten. Studies have shown that children who are prepared to learn before they start school do much better after they start. And that's the whole idea behind The Don Brewer Learning Center.

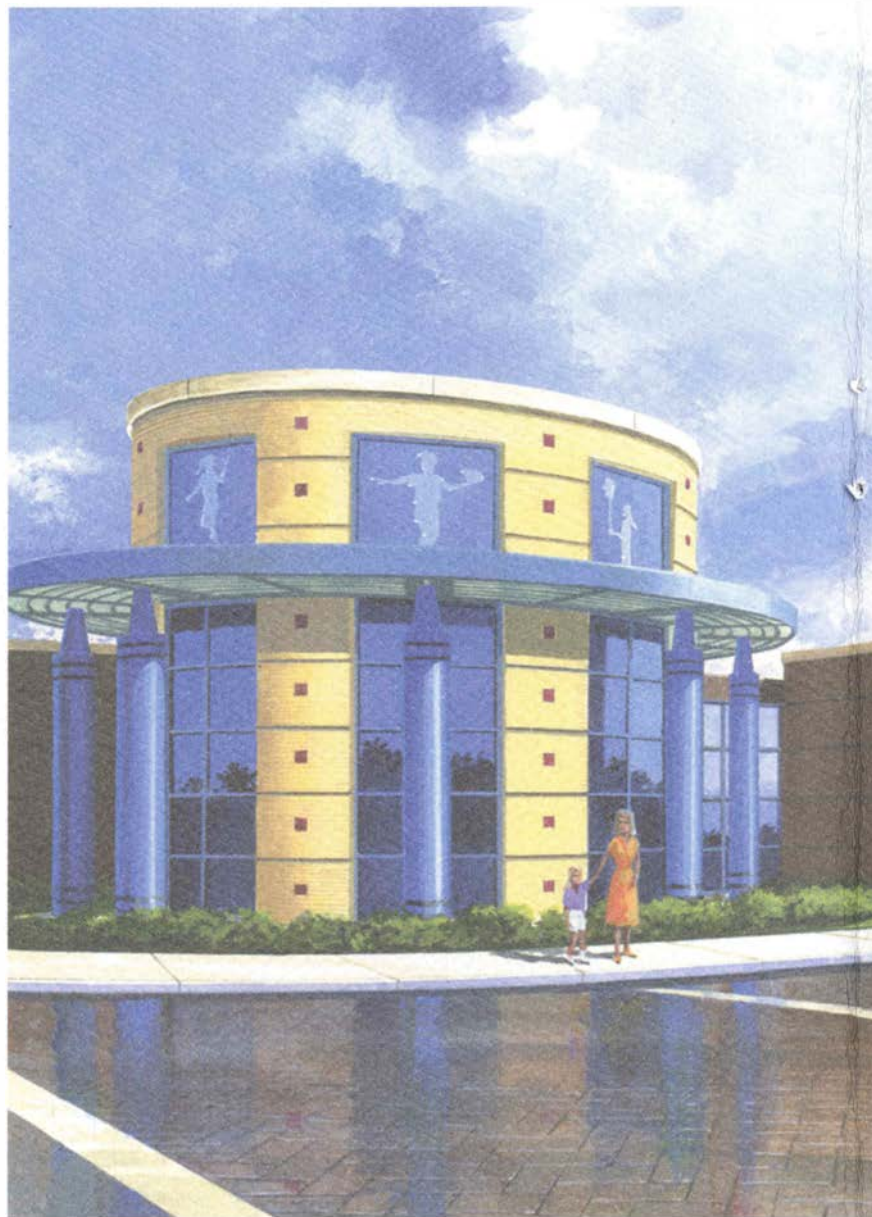
Here, children start to build learning and reading skills in many ways. They do it by playing, looking at books, listening to stories and taking part in creative activities. We've found that even scribbling helps children build learning skills!

Evidence shows that high-quality early education offers long-term benefits for both children and society—benefits that can substantially offset the costs involved in providing that early education and care.

The Don Brewer Learning Center is an extended day-care center, but it offers much more. It gives children the skills they need to read, write, speak and listen well. And it helps children start on the path to success in every part of their lives.

teaching others to teach

The Don Brewer Learning Center isn't just a place for kids to learn. It's a place where teachers learn, too. It is a "laboratory" for developing new ways to improve early learning in children. And it will train educators in the most effective teaching techniques, based on methods known to prepare children for learning.



We think the Center will dramatically improve early child care and learning throughout our region and the state.

part of a larger effort

The Don Brewer Learning Center is a partnership between the City of Jacksonville, the Florida Institute of Education at the University of North Florida, neighborhood centers serving children from low-income families and child advocates in Jacksonville and across the state of Florida.

Unique to both Jacksonville and the nation, the Center integrates a learning environment that provides for the ongoing development of training tools, the training of community coaches for outreach and the intent to take what is learned here to the broader Jacksonville community.





the don brewer
learning
center offers:

- An interactive library for the entire neighborhood
- A playground that is also a learning experience
- An art wall that educates and inspires
- A garden that sparks curiosity and meaningful interaction
- Health screening and health care that extends to The Brewer Learning Center families

working together makes it work

The education professionals at The Don Brewer Learning Center depend on the participation of parents, teachers, researchers and child-care professionals. Working together, we can all make early literacy work for our children.

our vision

The Don Brewer Early Learning and Professional Development Center, working as a part of and in collaboration with, the Jacksonville Children's Commission, will serve as a driving force to dramatically improve the readiness outcomes of Jacksonville's children, ages birth to five, with a special emphasis on literacy through collaborative partnerships among private, public and governmental agencies and constituencies.





The Center is named in honor of a man who touched many lives in Jacksonville. A tireless advocate for children and education, Don Brewer was instrumental in creating the Community School Program for Duval County. In 1976, he received the Community Educator of the Year Award as well as the FACE Outstanding Community Leader Award.

A member of the Jacksonville City Council, Don also served on numerous civic organizations, including the Arlington Civic Council, the Chamber of Commerce, the Association for Hearing Handicapped Children and the Northeast Florida Easter Seal Society.

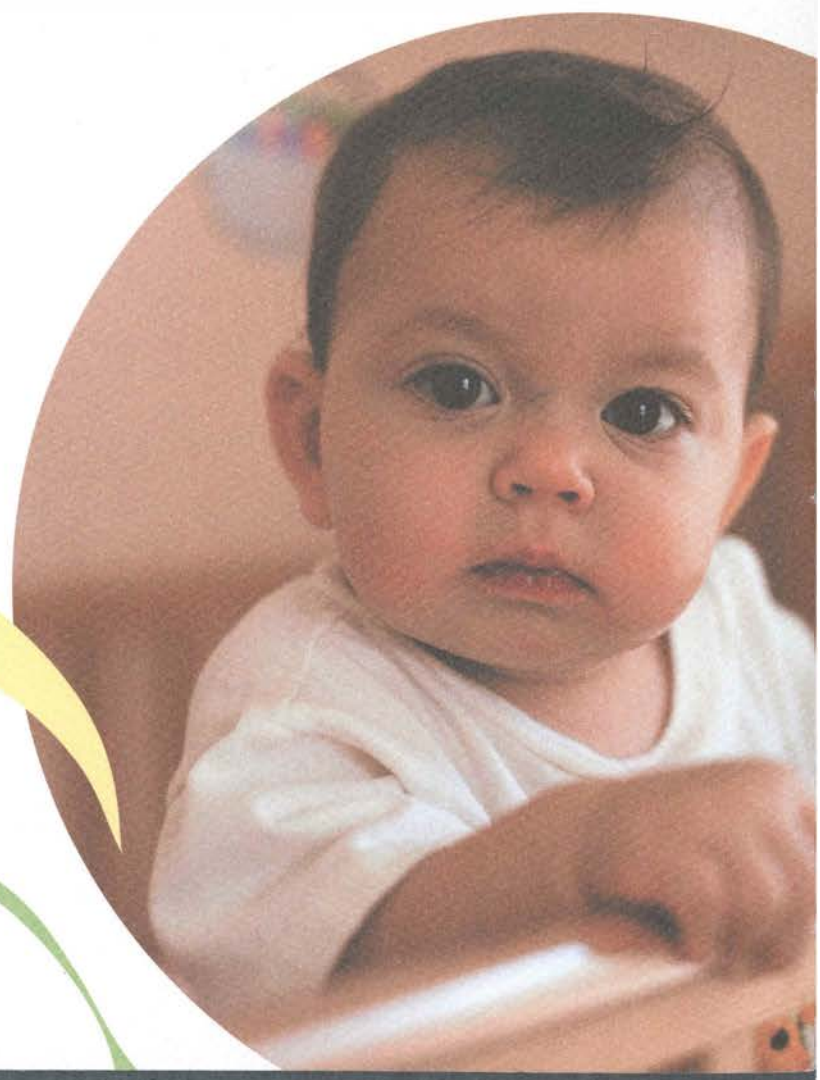
Upon his untimely death in 1999, Don left a legacy of public commitment and service, determination, innovation and most important of all, unselfishness. It is only fitting that our Center for children bear his name.

A memorial recognizing Don will be placed near the entrance of the Center as a reminder that change is possible when individuals are willing to devote their time and energies to make a difference in the lives of others.

our mission

The mission of The Don Brewer Early Learning and Professional Development Center is to serve as part of a city-wide, research-based and results-driven school readiness support infrastructure that brings together researchers and practitioners to tackle pressing problems of practice by:

- Establishing a community-based model demonstration center, serving children in urban, high-needs neighborhoods, by implementing and assessing promising practices needed for a child-focused, results-driven and high-quality early care, healthy development and learning system.
- Developing and implementing a practice-focused research and development agenda that results in research and evidence-based strategies, tools and materials that Jacksonville school readiness practitioners can use in their classrooms to improve school readiness outcomes for children, especially those placed at risk of entering school under-prepared.
- Developing outreach and professional development strategies, tools and models to help Jacksonville's front-line school readiness practitioners acquire and use the knowledge and skills needed to improve the readiness outcomes of the children with whom they work.
- Forging strong collaborative partnerships with local higher-education institutions, school readiness service providers and advocacy agencies, governmental agencies and other community stakeholders to improve the readiness outcomes for all of Jacksonville's children.



Jacksonville Early Literacy Partnership

Jacksonville: Where Reading Begins

RALLY
JACKSONVILLE!



LEADING WITH READING

2004

Convened by Mayor John Peyton

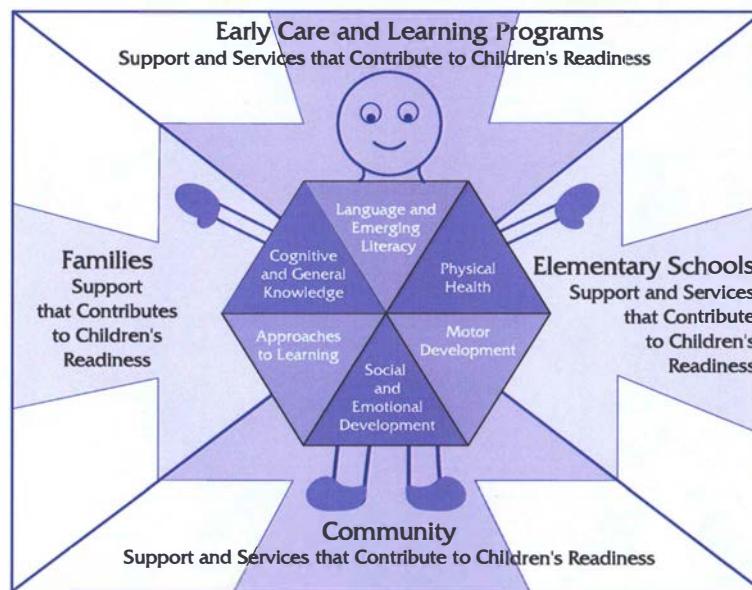
What Is Early Literacy?

Early literacy refers to children's development of beginning literacy skills (reading, writing, oral language, and listening) that are interconnected, each influencing the other as children grow and develop. (Morrow: Literacy Development in the Early Years)

Early literacy is a highly social activity, mediated by people who care about children's development and who are as eager to introduce them to literacy as to other important features of the world that they are entering. (Peter Hannon: How Can We Foster Children's Early Literacy Development Through Parent Involvement)

Literate behaviors include writing and other creative or analytical acts, and at the same time invoke very particular bits of knowledge and skill in specific subject matter domains. (National Research Council: Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children)

"Fully literate" means being able to use strategies independently to construct meaning from text, draw upon text, build conceptual understanding, effectively communicate ideas orally and in writing, and possess an intrinsic desire to read and write. (Morrow, Gambrell, and Pressley: Best Practices in Literacy Instruction)



How Is Early Literacy Acquired?

Development of early literacy skills occurs in the everyday contexts of home, community, early learning settings, and school through meaningful experiences that require the use of literacy in real-life settings, children interact with books other materials, adults and other children.

Children begin developing literacy skills through play, looking at books, listening to stories, playing out/retelling a story that has been read several times, and doing creative activities that use bits of knowledge from specific subject matter. Even scribbling helps children develop writing skills.

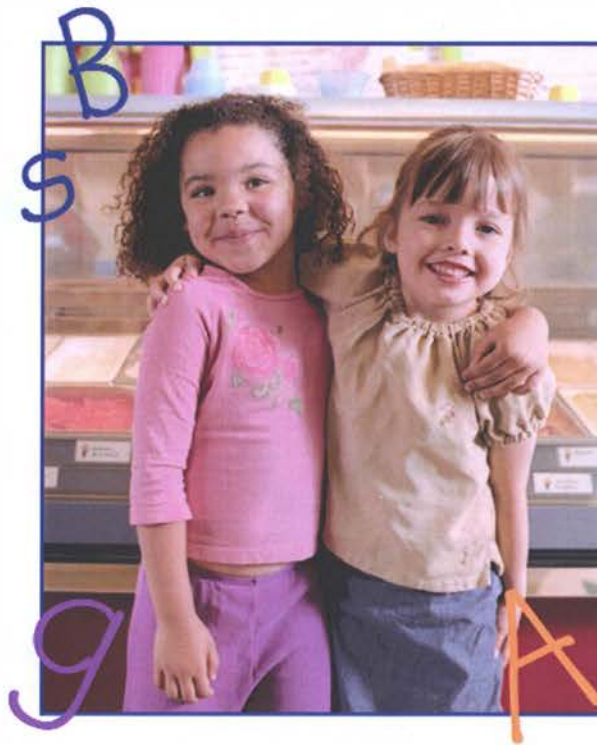
Children's learning is best facilitated in safe and nurturing environments that are language- and print-rich.

Children's learning of important early literacy skills is enhanced when children are given the opportunity to:

- experiment with and practice expressing their ideas and understanding of the world around them;
- interact and engage in conversations with caring adults and other children; and
- engage in letter and sound knowledge, phonological awareness and phonics connections, print concepts and emergent writing, reading aloud and emergent comprehension, oral language, listening and vocabulary development, and independent reading activities.

Why are Early Literacy and Quality Preschool Important?

- Children are born ready to learn; 90% of brain growth occurs before kindergarten. Recent research find that children have far greater capacities for learning than previously believed, calling into question current simplistic conceptions of “developmentally appropriate” practices. (*Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 1998)
- Economic, social, and workplace changes in our communities, state, and nation make improving the quality of early learning and education and access to high-quality a top priority. (*Just Read Florida*, 2001; *No Child Left Behind Legislation*, 2002)
- Research over the past two decades documents the importance of high-quality educational experiences for children enrolled in early learning and care (birth to five) programs. (*Eager to Learn*, 2001)
- Researchers estimated that four-year-old children in professional families would have heard about 45 million words as compared to 13 million words heard by children from low-income families. (*Hart & Risley*, 1995)
- About 39% of children from low-income families recognize most of the letters of the alphabet as they enter kindergarten as compared to about 85% of their more affluent peers. (*Uneven Start*, 2002)
- Many children who do not know the alphabet when they enter kindergarten are behind in reading at the end of first grade. (*Juel*, 1988) If 50 first graders have a problem reading, then 44 of them still have problems reading in fourth grade. (*NCES*, 2002)
- Research conducted in the past 20 years concerning how children learn to read, what they need to know about books, print, writing, and language, and preventing reading difficulties has dramatically changed attitudes and ideas about how we can best help children come to school ready to read and ready to succeed. (*Morrow*, 2001)
- High-quality pre-K experiences can help all children, especially children from low-income families, come to school ready to read and succeed. Four major research studies demonstrate how children benefit from high-quality pre-K:
 - increased achievement test scores,
 - improved behavior and attitudes,
 - decreased special education referrals,
 - decreased crime and delinquency, and
 - increased high school graduation rates.(*FACES Head Start Report*, *High/Scope Perry Preschool Study*, *Abecedarian Study*, *Chicago-Child Parent Centers Study*)
- Business and education leaders such as the Committee for Economic Development (CED) document an accumulating body of evidence to support an increased investment in high-quality preschool. As noted in its most recent research report, *The Productivity Argument for Investing in Young Children*, 2004, “The best way to improve the American workforce of the 21st century is to invest in early education to ensure that even the most disadvantaged children have the opportunity to succeed alongside their more advantaged peers.”



The Mayor's Role: Tackling a Complex Problem

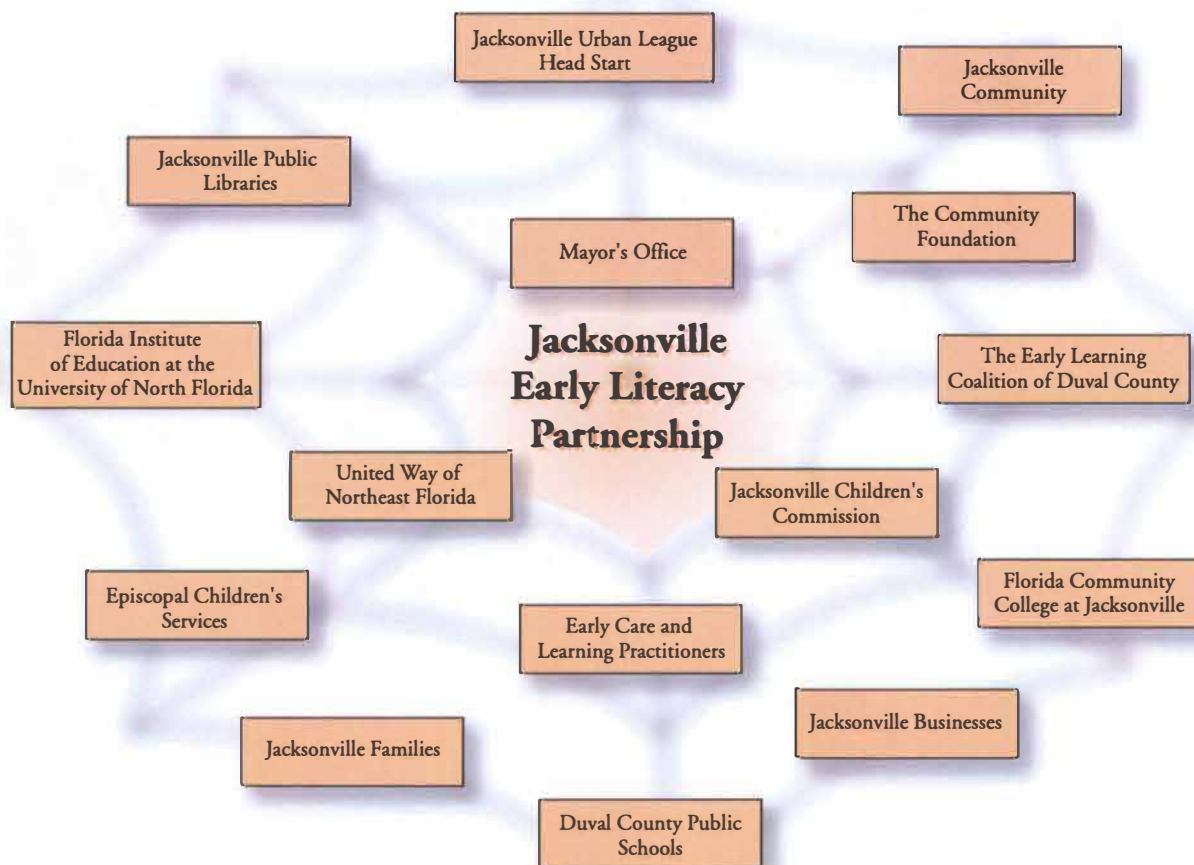
Mayor John Peyton has responded to the need for Jacksonville to invest in early care and learning by:

- Engaging the community in developing a shared vision for high-performing learning for all children;
- Mobilizing the spirit and resources of the Jacksonville community to make literacy and reading core values.
- Providing leadership to facilitate and sustain partnerships within the community to realize the vision;
- Stimulating and facilitating the improvement of early care and learning services that will lead to improved literacy-related outcomes for Jacksonville's children by supporting research-based innovation.

- Securing additional resources and investing in ways to improve the quality of early care and learning in Jacksonville.

- Keeping the community focused on results and using what is learned to improve the quality of early learning and literacy opportunities for Jacksonville's children.

The Mayor's Office took the lead in convening and vigorously promoting the Jacksonville Early Literacy Partnership Initiative. His support has included the provision of a Special Assistant to launch the initiative, and providing funding for a majority of the Year One activities.





The Vision

The Jacksonville Early Literacy Partnership Initiative begins with a vision that must involve each and every citizen in Jacksonville *working together to make Jacksonville...*

... the most literate *community* in Florida...
a *community* where everyone reads... a *community*
where literacy and reading are core values are embodied in
our policies, goals and daily lives.

... a place where *parents and families*
are active partners in their children's learning.

... a place where all children come to school healthy and
ready to read, learn, and succeed.

... a place where all children read at grade level by the third
grade and continue throughout *their school years*
to achieve rigorous academic standards, are able to solve
complex problems creatively and ethically, and excel
in a culturally diverse and technologically sophisticated
world.

Guiding Principles of the Jacksonville Partnership for Literacy

- Weave together effective efforts underway in many sectors of our community and accelerate these efforts and their impact.
- Strengthen and improve the quality of early care, literacy and learning programs in all sectors of our community.
- Strengthen the links between school readiness and public school programs, working to improve literacy outcomes for children in grades K-3.
- Use the “bully pulpit” of the Mayor’s office to focus attention and awareness on literacy and learning.
- Engage parents and families as primary, essential participants in the development and learning of their children.
- Implement neighborhood demonstration projects that test innovative techniques to enhance early literacy – strategies that, if effective, could be utilized more broadly throughout the community.
- Research promising efforts and practices in other communities.
- Develop and make available a “virtual” data partnership and gateway to: access information, track outcomes, and report on progress.
- Build a community-wide collaborative partnership that features trust, recognition, and appropriate accountability.
- Make fact-based, data-driven decisions and recommendations with a continuing focus on the vision of making Jacksonville **the most literate community in Florida.**



Jacksonville Partnership for Literacy

City of Jacksonville, Duval County Public Schools, Early Learning Coalition of Duval County, Episcopal Children's Services, Florida Community College at Jacksonville, Jacksonville Children's Commission, The Community Foundation, Jacksonville Public Library, Jacksonville Urban League Head Start Program, United Way of Northeast Florida, University of North Florida and Florida Institute of Education

Community Advisory Board (CAB)

Jacksonville Early Literacy Partnership Policy Council (PPC)

Goal #1

Make Literacy and Reading Core Jacksonville Values

Community Awareness, and Literacy Advocacy Work Team

Mayor's Reading Club Work Team

RALLY Volunteers Work Team

Goal #2

Enhance the Quality of School Readiness Programs

Quality Rating System Work Team

Career Ladder for Preschool Practitioners Work Team

Quality Literacy Support Teams Work Team

Goal #3

Create Neighborhood Early Literacy Demonstration Zones

#1: The Don Brewer Early Learning/Professional Development Center Work Team

#2: S.P. Livingston Family Involvement/Early Literacy HUB Work Team

Other Demonstration Projects To Be Announced

Goal #4

Measure and Share Results and Progress

Accountability, Measurement, and Data Partnership

Make Literacy and Reading Core Jacksonville Values

Outcomes:

- ❑ Annual summits for literacy stakeholders to review progress and prioritize future actions.
- ❑ Literacy and learning institutionalized in policies and actions as core values in Jacksonville.
- ❑ Increased community understanding of the importance of early literacy and high-quality preschool to Jacksonville's economic prosperity.
- ❑ Increased community understanding of what high-quality means.

Create Neighborhood Early Literacy Demonstration Zones

Outcomes:

- ❑ Established neighborhood early literacy demonstration zones that test promising practices and help transfer effective practices into widespread use, while supporting continuous improvement through applied research.
- ❑ The first demonstration project, the Don Brewer Early Learning and Professional Development Center, recognized as a national model for leading-edge childcare practices, professional development, and applied research, targeting ways to improve readiness outcomes for children, particularly those at-risk of future academic difficulties.
- ❑ The second demonstration project, the S.P. Livingston Family Involvement and Early Literacy HUB, results in proven strategies that significantly increase the numbers of families actively engaged in their children's learning.

Enhance the Quality of School Readiness Programs

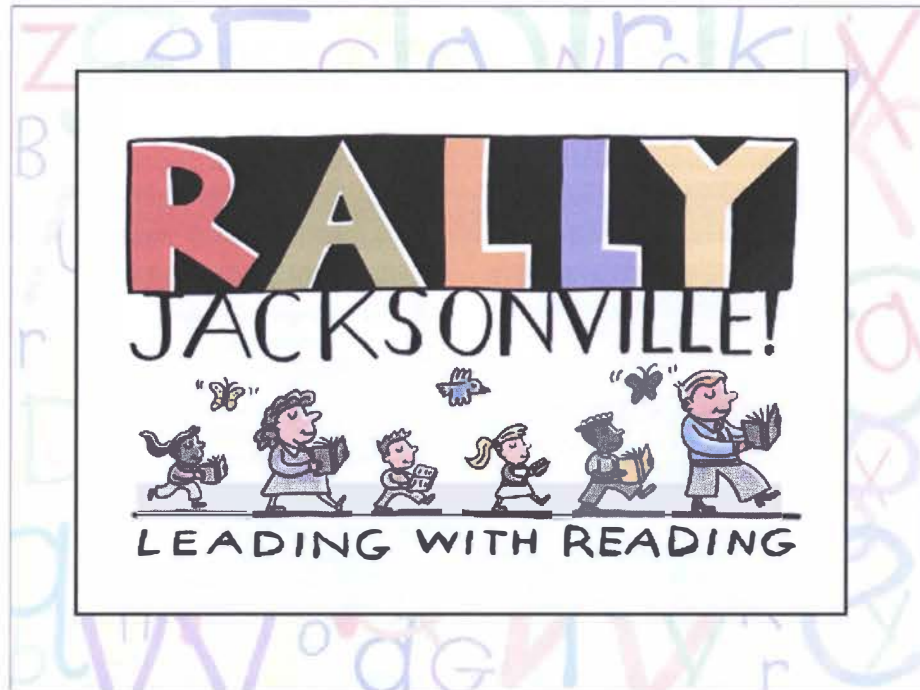
Outcomes:

- ❑ Widespread use of the Early Learning Coalitions of Duval's Quality Rating System for early learning centers.
- ❑ Articulated high-quality, literacy-focused career ladder, resulting in increased numbers of early learning practitioners holding CDA credential, associate degrees and/or bachelor's degrees.
- ❑ Increased number of early learning centers providing standards-based, high-quality early care and learning services delivered by well-prepared practitioners.
- ❑ Improved children's outcomes in all six readiness domains, with special attention to literacy.

Measure and Share Results and Progress

Outcomes:

- ❑ An accountability system that monitors and measures progress and shares results with partners, families, decision- and policy-makers, and the public.
- ❑ A well-functioning, community-based accountability, measurement, and data partnership.
- ❑ Increased community capacity to learn from our experiences, assess our progress, question our results, and make needed changes.



For more information, contact:

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A collaborative effort among the City of Jacksonville, Duval County Public Schools, Early Learning Coalition of Duval County, Episcopal Children's Services, Florida Community College at Jacksonville, Jacksonville Children's Commission, The Community Foundation, Jacksonville Public Library, Jacksonville Urban League Head Start Program, United Way of Northeast Florida, University of North Florida and the Florida Institute of Education





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